

# Church Quarrels: How Ended

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*By*

Ezra P. Giboney, D.D.



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## Introduction

**C**HURCH quarrels, contrary to the popular conception, have often been overruled in the providence of God for the advancement of the cause of Christ. A serious difference between the leaders of the apostolic church led to the calling of the first ecclesiastical council. The question at issue was as to whether the Gentiles must conform to the Jewish customs and ceremonies in order to become Christians. It was answered on the side of right and a precedent was set as to the method by which all subsequent controversies might be amicably adjudicated for the good of the church.

One of the most fascinating stories that has been preserved in the record of the early church is that which portrays the friendship between the two missionaries, Paul and Barnabas. But eventually, differences arise between these two stalwart and aggressive messengers of Christ. They quarrel over the question as to whether John Mark, who had turned back on a former missionary

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journey, should be taken with them. And the contention was so great between them that they parted company, and Paul went on with Silas, while Barnabas traveled over another route with John Mark as his companion. In this incident we have another record of how a quarrel may be overruled for the good of the church. Instead of two men traveling as missionaries there are four. Instead of a few towns and cities visited the number is doubled, and the field of evangelistic effort is correspondingly enlarged.

The greatest ecclesiastical conflict of the Christian era was started by Martin Luther. Though it was the beginning of a long and bitter struggle, resulting in hatred, jealousy and wars, there are few outside the Catholic church who would have the temerity to dispute the statement that the Protestant Reformation has brought the world a larger liberty and a more abundant life than any possible compromise could ever have accomplished.

There are three classes of people in every local congregation and in every church council in their attitude toward questions of administration, pol-

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icy and doctrine. First: There are those who have the native instinct of the sons of Erin, who love a scrap for the sake of a scrap. With them there is only one thing in the world more to be desired than an ordinary fight, and that is a good fight. They are never happy unless in pursuit of some heretic or in obeying the Biblical injunction of contending earnestly for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints. Second: There are the peace-at-any-price people. They are willing to make any kind of peace rather than have even the semblance of a quarrel. Third: There is the group that stand for principle, no matter what the cost, and who realize that to sacrifice a principle is not the basis of harmony but the cause of unending strife and turmoil.

If some of the modern pacifists in the church had lived in Bible times they would have made haste to the city of Jerusalem, called Pontius Pilate, Caiaphus the High Priest, Peter and John into consultation, and urged them in the interests of peace and harmony to get together and compromise their differences. But settlement in this manner of either national or ecclesiastical affairs

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is treason against your country and blasphemy against your God. Whenever any group begins to barter away their principles under the camouflage of seeking peace and unity, it behooves their brethren to call for division. Under such conditions division is to be desired rather than unity. There must be a clear line of division between right and wrong, between heaven and hell, between Christ and the world, between Bible Christianity and modern substitutes for it.

Unfortunately, many of the church quarrels that rend asunder congregations and impair their usefulness cannot be dignified by speaking of them as a battle for principles. They have not the saving grace of involving questions of right and wrong, but have arisen over matters of personal ambition, petty jealousies, and animosities that could well have been compromised or adjusted in a spirit of give and take which would have proven a means of edification to the participants as well as better serve the cause in which the contending parties were loyal and faithful adherents.

# The Pastor

## THE CHIEF CAPTAIN AS A DISTURBER OF THE PEACE

"He that ruleth his own spirit is  
greater than he that taketh a city."





## The Pastor

**T**HERE are many different ways by which God might have accomplished his purpose of giving the gospel message to the world. All things being possible with him, he might have chosen that it should be proclaimed through the medium of angel voices. Or he could have employed expressive symbols, written in such a way that all could read and understand. In his infinite wisdom he passed by these possible methods, and ordained that it should be through human instrumentality that the plan of salvation should be presented to mankind. It was through the foolishness of preaching that the world was to be saved. Consequently, those who are called of God into the ministry become instruments in his hands, divinely ordained, sent upon a divine commission, and with divine authority for what they preach.

Unfortunately, many of those who are preaching would have some difficulty in convincing even the Christian portions of the population in their

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respective parishes that their commissions came from such a high source. Because a person is orthodox and believes in the fundamental teachings of Christianity, it does not follow that he has been called to preach. Because one is upright in character, sincere and devout in his desire to promote the cause of Christ, it does not imply that his service should be rendered in the pulpit. Perhaps some of those in the ministry entered their life work at the suggestion of a parent who reasoned somewhat after the manner of an old farmer who had many sons. One day he was speaking to a friend of his plans for them and of what he expected them to do. Repeating their names, he called attention to their distinguishing traits of character, and referred with pride to the gifts in which any of them excelled. Finally, he came to one who did not seem to possess any qualities that would set the world on fire. "There is John," said he. "He was never very strong, and is not of much use on the farm. I guess we will make a preacher out of him." His idea of a call to the ministry was like that of the negro that Booker T. Washington tells about in his

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autobiography. This darkey was out in the fields at work when suddenly in the heat of the noonday sun he lifted his eyes toward heaven and said: "O Lawd, the work am so hard, the cotton am so grassy, and the sun am so hot, I guess this darkey am called to be a preacher."

While it is only by ridicule that we can throw the right light on some of those in the pulpit, it must be recognized that when a man is really called of God, there is no other work or position in life comparable with that of the minister of the gospel. Studying to show himself approved unto God, he is indeed a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. Other callings have their place, and are just as necessary as the ministry in the divine economy of the universe. But for possibilities in accomplishing good for one's fellowmen, preëminent above all other work in life is that of the Christian minister.

Having an appreciation of these facts, it is an easy matter to understand the intense anxiety of so many people as to the type of man who shall direct the work of their church. One of the first and most essential requirements to insure the suc-

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cess of any church is efficient leadership on the part of the pastor. When a man becomes pastor, he assumes a position of responsibility not only as a proclaimer of the truth, but also as the chief executive of the organization in which he is to work. He may be called of God into the ministry, but may not be fitted in mentality, gifts, experience or in any other way for the leadership of certain types of churches.

Every organization worthy the name must have a head, and the church militant is no exception. Three men elected by congress as a commission could not build the Panama Canal. It was only when Theodore Roosevelt, then president of the country, appointed one as the chief executive of the commission, and thereby conferred on him power and responsibility, that the great engineering undertaking was pressed through to a speedy and successful completion. However important it may be to have a high standard of character on the part of church membership, as desirable as it may be to have them consecrated in lives of prayer and service, the forces of the church can only be made effective when directed by an intelli-

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gent and efficient leadership. The lack of these qualities on the part of the pastor has frequently meant confusion and disorder in a church made up of a fine type of Christian manhood. A minister, granted a leave of absence by his church, was tendered a banquet. In response to a toast, he remarked, "I do not believe in a pastor forcing his will upon the people. This church was not built just the way I wanted it to be. I did not insist on having my way, because I wanted to preach in it after it was built." Here we have the philosophy of the cheap church politician. A man who assumes this attitude is more concerned about pleasing a few of his constituency than he is about doing the right thing for the future welfare of the church. The person who will sacrifice the welfare of a congregation by giving his consent to the erection of an inadequate building in order that he may have the privilege of preaching to them when it is finished is a poor leader. His wishbone is where his backbone ought to be.

On the other hand a person who adopts a policy of iron, who forces his will on the congregation, right or wrong, must reap the reward of a divided

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church. The headstrong man who has a single track mind has wrecked as many churches as the one who for the sake of holding his position trims his sails to every wind that blows. A person may be a good Christian and yet not be able to get along peaceably with his fellow men. He may be an effective preacher as he stands in the pulpit, and yet be a disturber of the peace when he attempts to manage the administrative work of the congregation. Some of the finest men that we have known in the gospel ministry are those who are so obstinate and tenacious in maintaining the eternal rightness of their own views, that they invariably start some kind of a quarrel in every church they serve. The poise of person and finesse of manner by which one may get along smoothly and justly with his fellow men is a fine art to which they have devoted little thought or attention. While devout and loyal to the faith, they utter their opinions as though they had the finality of divine inspiration. Though perfectly sincere, they have no higher conception of the function of church government than to insist on having their own way irrespective of what the

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thought, wishes or desires of their constituency may be.

Rev. G. was a man of this type. He came from Wales which is noted among other things for the high class of preachers it has sent into every part of the world. He excelled as a preacher, both in the content of his messages and in the manner in which they were delivered. His personal appearance was attractive and dignified. He had been trained in the best schools, and his scholarship was ripened by constant study and reading on all sorts of subjects. He was a theologian of high order, and was able to present the fundamental doctrines of the Bible in such a way as to grip the minds of the average audience. He was a good pastor, thoughtful of his congregation in times of sickness and trouble, was affable and kind in his dealing with people in all walks of life. He was honored and respected as a man as well as a minister. Even his worst enemies had no complaints against him along these lines. And yet this minister with a superior mentality and all these admirable personal traits of character was never able to serve a church for a period

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of more than two years. He was a success as a preacher and in social life, but as an executive in dealing with men he was a lamentable failure. When he had finished his eloquent and persuasive appeals in the pulpit and stepped into a business session of the finance department or presided at a congregational meeting, he ceased to function as a counsellor and guide, and assumed the rôle of an autocrat. Instead of the customary courtesy and friendly consideration that he displayed in social intercourse, he now manifested an uncompromising despotism.

He was like multitudes of ministers who have been brought up in well-to-do homes, and have never had any practical experience in earning a livelihood. A few years at hard physical labor, or a position in commercial life where success depended upon a spirit of give and take, would have worked a miracle for him. Lacking in this valuable training, he attempted to carry the authority of dogmatic assertion, acceptable in the pulpit, into the administration of every department of the church. From the first day that he took his position as pastor, he let it be understood that



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he was the final authority in the settlement of all questions. He was there to run the church, and would not be handicapped or crippled in his plans by interference from those who had given little time or thought to these matters. Acting on this theory of administration, he proceeded to dictate the policies of the church down to the minutest detail. When the offering was received, he ordered the elders to take it into one of the side rooms and count it so that he could have a report before the close of the service. This had always been done at the end of the service under other pastors, but he insisted that there be no deviation from his own plan. When he was presiding at a public meeting, at which a program by the Sunday School was given, one of the workers came to him, and with a timid voice suggested certain changes. He replied, "I am here to run this program without any suggestions from you." When the officers came to talk over the plans of work, he rebuked them for meddling and suggested that he was capable of formulating the necessary policies without any advice from them.

It requires no very vivid imagination to picture

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the rising tide of hostility toward the preacher following the above course. For two years there was constant bickering and heckling on the part of both pastor and people. Whenever a group of the officers came together to discuss the church, it was not missions that they talked about, or the man in trouble who needed Christian fellowship, or an evangelistic campaign, or how they could improve the Sunday School and the Young People's Society. It was always an indignation meeting in which each confided to the other some new wrong that he had suffered under the lash of the pastor's tongue. When the wives of these officers met in the Ladies' Aid or the Missionary Society, the main topic of conversation was some new phase of the family troubles with the pastor. It never occurred to these good people that they should try to help the pastor do the work for which they had called him. Their only thought was to devise new ways in which to cripple him and make his work a failure so that he would be compelled to move on to another church. To attempt to correct his faults was too colossal an undertaking and would require too much time.

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So they proceeded to make his position as unpleasant as possible. Some refused to support him, but when death came to their families, they repented. Other people remained away from the services, but they soon found that getting grumpy and staying home did not stop the public gathering for worship, which was continued whether they were present or not. Finally the friction became so acute and exasperating to all concerned that the pastor resigned. He had served the church during a brief and stormy period of two years, and looking back to his experience in that town, he remarked to a friend, "The longer I preached to those scoundrels, the worse they became." Rev. G. served twenty-one churches in a period of forty years, and in addition acted for a couple of years as state superintendent of missions for his denomination. He had the saving grace of knowing when to quit. When trouble has begun in a church under the ministry of a man of this type, there is only one way of bringing it to an end, and that is by the pastor's resigning and going elsewhere.

Of a different type of mind and character was

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the Rev. F. He was a strong, rugged character, sure of the superiority of his own opinions, and determined to have them recognized, but very narrow in many of his views of life and religion. He was a self-made man, and consequently had a limited horizon which a liberal education would have corrected. He had much native talent which brought him into prominence in civic affairs in the communities where he lived, and made him a factor to be reckoned with in the councils of the church. By intensive study and wide reading he had endeavored to make up for the lack of culture which he might have received in the schools. The story of the two pastorates of this man is a record of almost constant trouble. When his brethren in the ministry would attend their annual conference, one of the first questions frequently asked was, "What is the latest news from Brother F.'s parish?" Incessantly at war with his brother ministers, always in open hostility against the public officials of the city, he made his pastorate a succession of quarrels. There was seldom a breathing spell in which his members could be sure of a state of peace. The old adage, "Like

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priest, like parish," was fulfilled to the letter in his case. The quarrelsome, fault-finding, uncompromising spirit of the pastor communicated itself to the parishioners, and any time in which they were relieved from a controversy with him was occupied with a squabble over some trivial matter among themselves. The pastor was a single man. It would have been a means of grace for him if he had been married; but a merciful providence did not inflict this hardship on any of his fair parishioners. No woman who saw his domineering nature in action, and witnessed the trials and vicissitudes of his tempestuous pastorates, was willing to share his life for better or worse. He had no church officers, because no man could be found who would submit to his imperialistic control. He could not persuade anyone to act as regular usher and attend to the preparation for worship, because no one could do it to suit him. Even the hymn books had to be gathered and placed on an appointed bench, and if so much as one of them was out of order, the offending helper was corrected in such a manner that he could never forget the sting of the rebuke. No one could be

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secured as janitor for more than a few weeks at a time because the building, to the pastor's mind, was always too hot or too cold, too much ventilated or too stuffy.

And yet so strong was the personality of this minister that he went into a town of four thousand population, in which there was no church of his denomination, rallied a group of people to his support, built a church and manse, and continued there as pastor for fifteen years. At the end of that period he had a membership of one hundred and about the same number in the Sunday School. His record in the ministry, however, was considered a failure not only by his brethren in the ministry, but also by himself. The various factions united against him, and in the end made life so miserable that he left the church, gave up the ministry, and went back into business, a disappointed and broken-hearted man.

It would be of little avail to tell the story of these two ministers with the tragic results to themselves and their churches unless we were able to cite in contrast one endowed with many of their dominant traits of character who has made a

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success. Rev. M. is of the same aggressive and positive type of personality, employing the imperialistic methods that meant their undoing, but doing it in such a way as to make his work stronger and more effective. The czarist tendency in his idea of church administration was frequently in evidence in the part which he took in the settlement of the national affairs of his denomination. It was applied with greater freedom and against less successful opposition to his local church. He trained the officers and members to recognize that his will was law in the management and arrangement of every detail in every department. When the new church building was under construction, he went over the work every day to examine the workmanship and the quality of the material used. Although the contract price was several hundred thousand dollars, and a reputable architect and a committee of representative men from the congregation had assumed entire responsibility for the proper construction, this minister found more things that needed changing and more necessary improvements in the plans than all others put together. His concern as to the building opera-

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tions was characteristic of his method of handling all the affairs of the church. Before accepting a call to become their pastor, he demanded the resignation of every officer, that another group might be elected in harmony with his plans and pledged to back him in their execution. This pastor was the real leader of the church in fact as well as in name. He was not the type that must consult the intellectual group to see whether his interpretation will fit their mode of thinking, nor the economic group to ascertain whether his principles are acceptable to big business, nor the society group to learn whether his ideas of social life will be well received. He received his commission to preach, not from men, but from God, and was in the church as pastor to preach and direct its affairs without fear or favor, without let or hindrance from any man. The very themes on which he spoke in the pulpit and his method of exposition gave the same impression as to how he thought the affairs of the church should be administered. Like Cromwell, his favorite topic was "The Second Coming of Christ to Rule with His Saints," of whom he was to be one. His



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choice text, made the basis of scores of sermons was, "All authority is given unto me." This text was interpreted in an orthodox way, but applied as the marching orders of the church of which he, as Christ's spokesman, was the chief executive.

Every department of the church was brought under his control and supervision as directly as was ever the Roman church in the zenith of the exercise of papal authority. Like the Jesuits, he aimed to make every assistant worker and subordinate official a corpse in the hands of his superior. No one was allowed to introduce any new method or try out any newfangled scheme without first having the stamp of his approval. The program of work was submitted to the official board and to the congregation, not for their consideration and discussion, with the possibility that it might be changed by some master of assembly at a critical moment, but that it might have their unqualified approval, and that the double weight of their sanction and authority might be given to the orders which he would issue at a later time to the rank and file of the membership. The assistant pastor, the choir master, the office secretary,

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the deaconess and the janitor were all brought under the same system of recognizing one seat of authority, and only one. The assistant pastor, instead of having an assignment to certain work and duties for which he would be held responsible, was given a list of instructions to direct his activities day and night. Each morning he was required to give a written report as to where he had been each hour of the preceding day, where he had called, the main topic of conversation, and the result of the call. When he went out to take charge of some church or Sunday School, there was placed in his hands a written order that he was expected to follow as punctiliously as a soldier does the special order from a general in time of war. In case he failed in any detail, he was not literally court-martialed and shot, but he suffered even worse humiliation as he received a broadside of ridicule, abuse and personal invective, as he stood on the carpet facing his chief. The janitor was controlled with even more exacting orders as to his routine of duties. He was given a set of rules regulating his hours, specifying the particular tasks for each day of the week and each

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hour of the day, even to the five o'clock hour on Saturday evening when he was released long enough to take a bath.

It can be easily understood how such a policy in the administrative work of a church would cause friction with the average he-man. Especially is this true of those who are accustomed to control large business affairs and who feel that their counsel as well as their money should be taken into account. Some would complain, some would rebel and resign, some would become sullenly inactive, while others would quietly withdraw and go to other churches; but during a long pastorate, this minister was able to achieve permanent success. The question naturally arises: How could he succeed with an autocratic policy while the other men following a like course headed straight toward disaster? One reason is that the strong man with preaching ability and the consequent prestige can pursue an aggressive and autocratic policy, and adopt tactics that are helpful to his success, but suicidal to a man less fortunately equipped. A young evangelist, hearing Rev. "Billy" Sunday in one of his

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campaigns, started out to follow his methods and copy his manner of expression; but he soon found himself overwhelmed by the opposition and speeded out of the city by the irate citizens and churchmen. Another young pastor, hearing Rev. Mark Matthews preach to great audiences in his Seattle church, thought to use the same methods in his work. He went to a tailor and purchased some gray striped trousers like those he had seen Dr. Matthews wear in his pulpit. He permitted his hair to grow to great length, and when he delivered his sermons, shook his head vigorously so that his locks would wave back and forth across his face. Then he removed the pulpit desk from his platform so that his church might appear like the one he had seen in Seattle, and he marched up and down the platform in delivering his sermon, just like Dr. Matthews, until some one in the audience might have shouted to him as they did to one of the old Roman orators, "How many miles have you talked to-night?" But the young amateur following the methods of the strong man not only made himself ridiculous,

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but soon became *persona non grata* to the church he was serving as pastor.

Another reason for the success of the autocratic method of the strong man, where weaker ones failed, is the fact that he had a program large enough to keep them united in constant activity. Every service was made evangelistic, every gathering in the church had as its ultimate end the winning of souls. The invitation and opportunity to accept Christ and enlist in his service was emphasized in every contact of the pastor and workers, from the young couple who joined their hands at the marriage altar to the score of missionaries who represented the church on the field of foreign missions. All these forces were marshalled in the battle against the hosts of wickedness, to work for the destruction of the enemy which is to be completed when Christ returns to reign. Undertaking this superhuman task, people from all walks of life came together and found themselves united in a cause. Realizing the strength of the forces against which they were contending, they had little time and energy to waste in feuds among themselves. A church with

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all activities centered in itself soon becomes disrupted by the contending factions and is rapidly shorn of all its power. On the other hand, many a minister has united a divided church by adopting an evangelistic program. Often a pastor of mediocre ability has become master of the situation and overcome strong opposition by going out to win souls. The church that would avoid quarrels and end those that are in their embryonic stage, cannot do better than turn the thought and effort of the congregation away from themselves to the larger service of ministering to the needs of others. The largest Protestant church in America makes evangelism the aim of all its services. There is never a sermon preached, or public worship conducted, either by radio or otherwise, that the appeal is not made for the immediate acceptance of Jesus Christ. That church has a large number of cranks and people with narrow religious views working in harmony with the most cultured and educated. It has the poorest in this world's goods working with the wealthiest and strongest business men of the city. It has been able to bring about this happy condition of affairs

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by making soul winning and good citizenship the matters of first importance.

Another and more important factor in enabling the minister previously mentioned to keep his large membership united in an aggressive program was his power of self-control. He knew how to end the church quarrels before they got under headway. Whenever any worker became offended, he was called into council and requested to express his complaint. No worker was ever allowed to quit his office or leave the church with a feeling of enmity toward the pastor or any of the officers. At least, no one was permitted to sever his relations with a sense of injustice rankling in his heart, no matter how trivial the occasion of the offense may have been, without every possible effort having been made toward reconciliation. No matter what the cause of trouble may have been, nor how meanly the disgruntled member may have acted under the heat of anger, it was all overlooked in an effort to make him realize that it was the heart's desire of the pastor and officers to treat him justly and help bear his burdens as a brother in Christ.

## CHURCH QUARRELS: HOW ENDED

It is this spirit of self-control on the part of the pastor as chief captain that will do more than anything else to avoid quarrels and end them when they are started. The minister who would keep his membership united under his leadership must first of all himself know what it means to follow. He who would guide others into those paths that lead to self mastery, must himself walk those paths. He who would govern others must first know what it means to govern himself.

When Thomas Marshall was Vice President of the United States, he employed some of his time on the lecture platform in discussing questions of vital importance to the welfare of the people. One of the favorite subjects on which he lectured as he journeyed over the country was entitled: "The Automatic Citizen." In that lecture he divided the citizens into three classes. First, the citizen who obeys the law because he is afraid of punishment if he does not obey it. Second, the citizen who obeys the law because it is the law. He never questions whether it is a good law or a bad one. It is sufficient for him to know that it is the law of the land. Third, there is the



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automatic citizen, who takes Christ as his Master and fashions his conduct after the divine model. When he hears footsteps behind, he does not need to fear that it is some policeman coming to take him into custody. When there is a knock at the door, he need not worry about an officer of the law coming with a warrant for his arrest. In fact he may not even know what the laws on the statute books are. He does not need to know. He obeys them automatically. You can depend upon him to think right, to speak right and to act right. Give him a public office and you can rely on him. Give him a position of trust and he will not betray you. Give him a position as an executive at the head of a church or one of its departments and people will gladly follow him. Having learned the secret of self-control, he automatically becomes fitted to become the leader of others.



## The Official Board

### THE CHURCH OFFICERS AS MINISTER BAITERS

Titus 1:7-9. "For the bishop must be blameless, as God's steward; not self-willed, not soon angry, no brawler, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but given to hospitality, a lover of good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled; holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gain-sayers."



## The Official Board

**G**OD'S best gift to any church is a group of great and good men to serve as its officers.

They stand before the church and the community in a representative as well as in an official capacity, to be recognized as the exemplars of the type of manhood that Christianity has made possible in the world. Multitudes that never cross the threshold of a church, who never take the time to read or study the Bible, look upon these men, and in their character and manner of life interpret the effect of the gospel message upon the lives of those by whom it has been accepted and tried out in the realm of practical experience. As we judge of a school by the kind of scholars that it graduates, as we estimate the factory by the sort of goods it puts on the market, so the man on the street or in the office receives his impressions and makes up his mind as to the intrinsic worth of the Christian faith. As a result of his social or business contact with the repre-

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sentative men of the church, he either turns away from it with an unfavorable prejudice, or is drawn toward it with a desire to make what it has to offer a part of his life and possessions.

There is no greater honor that the membership of a church can bestow upon one of their number than that of electing him to represent them in an official capacity. By that act he enters into a position where his judgment, words and deeds have a meaning not only for what he is as an individual, but also as an expression of the resources and the life of the institution of which he is a part. It is not only a distinguishing honor, but of far more importance, it opens up larger spheres for the exercise of his talents that might well be desired by anyone. There are many different avenues along which one might direct his steps in search of the most desirable objectives in life. He might plan to make the main purpose of his life the achievement of success in some line of art, literature or music. He might concentrate his power on some business vocation, with the hope of attaining a desirable position in the economic life of his time and accumulating a fortune.

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He might aspire to the service of his country in the realm of politics, and expect as a consequence to secure a place of honor and distinction. But when all that is offered by any one of these lines of activity has been realized, and life has run its course, there is no other achievement to which a man may look back with more satisfaction than to the years of faithfulness and efficiency in which he served as an officer in some church, however small the membership may have been or how obscure the hamlet in which it was located. In fact, his career in his chosen vocation may have been a lamentable failure as judged by the ordinary standards; but if his official position in the church was filled in such a way as to bring him the approval of conscience and the blessing of God, his life has been an eminent success. He may not have climbed high on the ladder of fame, but what does that amount to, in comparison with living on a plane of real manhood and service? He perhaps has not accumulated a vast amount of worldly goods, but of what significance is that, if he has found more valuable possessions in the wealth of experience and association in helping

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others to do the things worth while? He perchance has not received the pecuniary or political advancement that was deserved, but of what concern is that, if he has received the compensation, that cannot be measured by common standards, which comes through a consciousness of real guidance and help that was freely offered and given without money and without price?

Unfortunately, all of those who have had the privilege of serving as officers in the church have not measured up to the high standards that were set before them, nor have they always properly appreciated the seriousness of the authority that was conferred upon them as a sacred trust. How some men that we have known ever secured the position of trust in the church which they now hold, must ever remain one of the unsolved mysteries of life. In a certain church in which the officers are elected by vote of the people without much consideration as to their fitness for the position to which they aspire, the minister found himself confronted with a man who caused him much concern. In an effort to locate him in the department for which he was best qualified, he



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resorted to a quiz: "Can you pray?" "No." "Can you lead a meeting?" "No." "Can you teach a class in Sunday School?" "No." "Can you sing?" "No." "What can you do, my brother?" "Sir, if anyone tries to do something or carry out a program for the good of the church, I can make an objection." His mind was negative on every question. This may have been an inherited tendency for which he was not wholly to blame; but a man of this type should never have been given a position of leadership or authority. There are two classes of people in every community and two groups in every church. One group is made up of those who are always willing to work into any plan that has been indorsed by the officers and a majority of the people. They are willing to give their hearty support and good will to every undertaking that is for the benefit and upbuilding of the organization with which they are connected. The other class is made up of those who are constitutionally opposed to constructive work of any description. They like to ride on the brakes. They are happy when they can sit on the side lines, find fault or criticise.

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They were born in the objective case, they live in the objective case and will die in the objective case.

Sometimes a man of this latter class, by some unfortunate concurrence of circumstances, is given an official position in the church. While he was useful in the rank and file and had a place that he could fill better than any one else, the fatal mistake was made when he was placed in a position of authority and leadership. He now becomes a drag on the work, a thorn in the flesh of the pastor, and a source of exasperation to the other officers who are prompted by the right kind of motives. How to prevent men of this type from securing office, and the still more difficult question of how to remove them when once they have been placed in positions of authority, is one of the most delicate of all the questions that arise in the administration of the affairs of the church. Its improper handling has been one of the chief causes of strife, and has often resulted in dividing what was a harmonious congregation into groups of warring factions.

There have been instances where one man hold-

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ing an official position has been able to destroy the usefulness of a church for a period of several years. His elimination has not always been the easy matter that one might imagine. In one of the Rocky Mountain states there is a church that was crippled for years by the self-appointed leadership of a man of this type. He had the reputation of being a first class minister baiter. He made life a burden for every pastor who had attempted to conduct services and look after the spiritual interests of the people in the town of F. This place was a mission field, but the surrounding country was prosperous, and the people on the ranches would come long distances to trade and occasionally on the Sabbath to attend services. The minister's parish extended over a territory about forty miles square, and he was frequently called out into the country for a distance of forty or fifty miles to officiate at a funeral service or a wedding. It was a central point where the minister had an opportunity of filling a necessary place in the life of a large and scattered population outside of his own membership. The pastors, however, remained only a short time in this at-

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tractive field. After a brief pastorate they would come away with invariably the same complaint concerning the church officer with whom they found it difficult to work. Finally the Home Mission Committee decided that drastic measures must be adopted. A young, athletic minister of an aggressive type was secured for the pastorate. Before sending him out to his new parish, they described to him in detail the situation, and suggested the chief cause of failure on the part of his predecessors. They offered him a free hand to do whatever he thought best, and promised to stand back of him in any remedy he thought wise to apply. He had not been in charge very long until he had a serious clash with the notorious church official. The same methods were attempted on him that had been employed with such success on the ministers who had preceded him. But the overbearing, domineering merchant who attempted to browbeat the sky-pilot in the same way that he dictated to some of the helpless employees in his store, met his match this time. The discussion became heated, and before it ended the two men were engaged in a strenuous contest

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of physical strength. When the fray was finished, the tyrannical church officer was lying on his back in a helpless position, begging the young minister for mercy. It was a drastic method, but in this instance it was a short cut to an easy solution of the problem of strife in that church. The whole town appreciated the fact that a real, red-blooded man had come into their midst to preach the gospel and to teach their children by example as well as by precept. He had put into practice what many of their own number in their thought and imagination had realized was one of the needs of the church. They rallied to the support of the young pastor. Soon the little mission church was crowded to the doors and had to be enlarged to accommodate the crowds. To-day it is one of our strong, independent, self-supporting organizations.

A New England church located near the city of Boston had a somewhat similar experience. All its policies and methods were under the control of two Scotchmen, big of stature, little of character, self-opinionated, and determined to carry out their own policies in the face of all

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opposition. They assumed a domineering, dictatorial and patronizing attitude toward the other officers and the membership of the church in general. The various organizations and societies of the church could attempt nothing without first receiving the stamp of their approval. The young people were compelled to come with fear and trembling as humble suppliants in order to get any concessions at the hands of these twin autocrats. All the activities of the church were forced to flow through the narrow channels that these men marked out for them. Their overbearing dispositions were especially in evidence in their relationship to the pastor. They insisted that his thinking be confined to the scope of their own mental machinery, and his spiritual vision to the limitations of their own narrow horizons. They even boasted that they hired and fired the pastors, and for the good of the work, the shorter the pastorates the better. Finally the church called a man by the name of Rev. Donald Mc. Sufficient of his name is given to indicate that he came from the same nationality as the trouble-makers in the church. He was an ex-pugilist, who stood six feet

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one, and weighed two hundred and seven pounds. He had been in charge of the church for only a short time when he realized that he must act quickly and decisively if he were to avoid trouble. The congregation was greatly agitated, and many of them very much alarmed as they looked forward to the clash that they felt must inevitably come between the pastor and the elders. They did not have to wait long until the matters in dispute were brought to an issue and settled in such a manner as to promote the peace and harmony of the church. The climax came one day when the two elders visited the pastor in his study at the church, and proceeded to lay down the law as to the program that they expected him to carry out. Their special complaint was in regard to the Boy Scouts. They expressed themselves as opposed to an organization that had no ecclesiastical standing having any meetings in the church. Even if he were the head of the scout troop, they felt that he might better give his attention to what they called the strictly spiritual affairs of the congregation. They accused him of bringing great crowds of boys into the basement of the church,

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and turning it into a playhouse, and of damaging some of the furniture. They demanded that he take steps toward giving up his work with the scouts, and that they be forbidden to hold any more meetings in the basement. The pastor informed them that he was the head of the church, and supervisor of its policies and program. Under no consideration would he compromise by receiving dictation from any source as to what these should be. In order to coerce him and bring him into line with their ideas, the elders threatened him with trouble. He replied, "Gentlemen, if you are seeking trouble, you need not wait five minutes until you have all you want." Quietly walking over to one side of the room, he removed his coat, hung it on a nail, and remarked that if they wanted to fight to come on. Although both were strong men and over six feet in height, they refused the challenge, and immediately began a tirade of strong personal invective against him as a man and a minister. This kind of talk was something he had never tolerated while in business and now that he had become a minister, he did not feel that he was any less of a man. Seizing one



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of the men by the collar with one hand and by the seat of the trousers with the other, he hurled him through the door into the mud of the backyard; then turning quickly on the other who had started to attack him from the rear, he served him in like manner, emphasizing his exit with a swift kick. He then ordered the janitor, who was looking on as a witness, to turn the key in the door and lock them both out of the building. He followed this summary action with a congregational meeting, in which he forced the acceptance of the resignation of both these elders. Physical force applied in this spectacular manner produced wonderful results in giving new life to that church. From a quarrelling, divided company of people they were transformed into a band of enthusiastic, working Christians. He remained as pastor for sixteen years, and with united forces led his congregation forward to become the dominant factor in the religious and social life of the community.

Cases like these where physical force has been successfully used in the adjustment of church disputes are few and far between. Undoubtedly,

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this method is preferable to the weak-kneed, mollycoddle, peace-at-any-price policy that is sometimes employed in a futile attempt to set the house of God in order. A successful pastor, who was a great inspiration to his brethren in the ministry, was one who was recommended with the statement: "He can preach an exceptionally good sermon, and is sufficient of an athlete to lick any man in the congregation when he has finished." If this were the only solution for handling the minister baiter, it would be necessary only to secure a group of converted pugilists and hold them in reserve to be sent out to those pastorates where obstreperous officers need discipline. The successful pastor must be endowed with superabundant energy and excellent health to carry the burden of a modern church; but his main qualifications must always be a superior mentality and endowment of spiritual power. The use of physical force under any circumstances is a questionable method. Like war, it should only be employed as a last resort.

The minister who is qualified for the position to which he is called has available far more effec-

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tive weapons than force in the handling of the obstreperous elder. We have a fine instance of this in a small New England church a short distance away from the one that has just been cited in the environs of Boston. It was located in a small town and was in lively competition with a number of other struggling sects. The membership was made up of a well-to-do class that were distinctive from the other denominations in that locality in that they considered themselves a little better than the common crowd, and took especial pride in the fact that they had just as little religion as possible and yet enough to allow them to be classified with the others. The fact that they had a church name gave them standing as a social club in the life of the town.

This spirit had been fostered and maintained largely through the influence of a prominent physician, whose motives for identifying himself with the church were open to question. He had no real interest in the church and thought of it as a mere tool to be used for ulterior purposes. He had considerable prestige, not only on account of his professional standing, but also because of his

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affable qualities. Having been elected to an office, and taking a prominent part in all public functions and social activities, he made himself so strong that no important step could be taken in any department without first securing his consent. When the new pastor, Rev. H., and his wife arrived, he was the first man to meet them and extend a hearty welcome. In a few days he called at the manse, and in a patronizing way outlined a program suggestive of some of the things essential to their success. Wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove, the young minister listened attentively and then expressed in a hearty manner his appreciation of the interest of the physician.

In a short time the minister had completed a survey of the parish, and had taken the first steps in putting into effect his own program of what he thought necessary for the welfare of the church. It was so much more aggressive than anything previously attempted, that general interest was aroused in the new pastor and his work. Not many months had passed before friction arose between the pastor and the physician. Their ideas

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as to the kind of work that ought to be done were so different that the issues at stake were at once apparent to the entire congregation. The physician saw the crisis coming, and not feeling altogether sure in his position, approached the pastor in a very suave manner with the suggestion that he was too big a man for this little church, and that he should consider his own interests by seeking a more promising field. The minister brought the matter before the attention of the official board, and found that, with one exception, they were unanimous for him to remain. This occurred three weeks before the congregational meeting, when the opportunity would be offered to secure a test vote of the membership. A woman possessing a good knowledge of human nature allied herself with the physician, and canvassed the congregation in an effort to create a sentiment favorable for the removal of the pastor.

When the time arrived for calling the congregational meeting to order, an elder living twelve miles in the country took the chair as moderator. He had not been active in the matters in dispute, but he appreciated the significance of the decisions

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to be made. The physician entered the room as white as a sheet. After the meeting had been opened with prayer by the pastor, the moderator suggested that since matters involving the pastor were to be discussed, he and his wife would be excused from attendance. They went to the parsonage and calmly awaited results. Their only prayer was that they might maintain peace of mind and let the Lord fight their battle for them. They were perfectly willing to leave the church and seek another field of labor, but they did not feel that it would be right to leave under fire until the matter had been brought to a test vote. The question of seeking a change in the pastorate was brought before the congregation. The moderator stood and put a series of questions as to the condition of the church in order to bring out its present standing in comparison with what it had been at the beginning of the present pastorate one year before. Has the church attendance increased? Have new members been received? Has the Sunday School improved, and does it show efficiency in its work? Are the young people being cared for in their social and spiritual life?

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Have the finances of the church been properly cared for? In answer to these questions the replies were favorable, reflecting credit on the leadership of the pastor. The moderator then remarked, "The question of a change of pastors is not before us. We will pass to the next order of business." The physician resigned from all the positions that he held in the church. Some of his friends withdrew; but in the meantime it went forward to double its membership and multiply its activities.

This fortunate outcome of what threatened to be a disastrous division was due largely to the strategy of securing a diplomat to preside and guide the congregation to a decision that was for their own good, as well as to do justice to all concerned. The pastor had gone forward in the course that any right thinking pastor should desire to follow. He had done his work as a faithful servant of his Master with the one thought of the good of the church at heart. When trouble had arisen, he held his peace, standing on his record as his only defense. While he was conscious that all of his trouble was coming from a few people who did not have the welfare of the

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church at heart, he did not strike back. He was not overcome with evil, but overcame evil with good.

One of the most popular methods of escaping the minister baiter is that of resigning. Whenever the troublesome member becomes too strong and aggressive, the pastor obeys the Biblical injunction, shakes the dust of that town off his feet, and seeks other places to proclaim his message and do his work. In many cases this is the best policy, but there are other instances when it is proof of moral cowardice and dereliction in the performance of duty. If the opposition on the part of a group of people is personal, it is a sign of strength if the minister allows it to pass without any effort at resistance. But when opposition is directed toward an efficient policy, toward the cause for which the church stands, and when the welfare of others is at stake, the failure to resist is not only a sign of weakness, but of moral imbecility. When men take advantage of their position and prestige to work injury to a good cause, and those who represent that cause stand by and meekly submit in a plea for peace, or escape by



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resigning, they make the malefactors in power that much stronger to stay the advancement of the work and to hamper the activities of the man who is to follow.

On the other hand the wise pastor knows his limitations. When he has finished his work he will be glad to resign with the goodwill of as many as possible to take with him. If he anticipates trouble after he has served for a time, he will find that resigning and taking up work in a new field is more satisfactory than going through the agony of mind and distress of spirit which is sure to come through the opposition or dissatisfaction of even a small minority of his membership.

Rev. H. has held three long pastorates during his life and has had what may be considered a successful ministry. He has resigned from each of the three churches for the same reasons. He is eloquent, forceful, scholarly, scriptural in laying the foundations of his sermons, pleasing of address, genial in his social life, and generally well liked by the people of his parish as well as by his brethren in the ministry. He is the type of man that the stronger vacant churches are seeking

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when in the mood to call a pastor and has consequently had all his ministerial experience in churches that are above the average.

Soon after taking charge of his first church he found that his idea of the aims and purposes of the church was at variance with those held by the officers and influential members. They felt that the church was an asset to the community from a moral and social viewpoint. They took pride in the fact that they were recognized as having part in its work. They wanted the building kept in a neat and orderly way, its services dignified, its preaching attractive, its music according to the best technique of the art, but they did not want the Bible teachings applied to the practical affairs of their everyday life. So they went to the minister and suggested that his ideas were well enough for a former time, but that they should be broadened and made up-to-date to suit the needs of their church and community. Rev. H. took issue with them in this matter and declared that these were principles about which there can be no compromise. He believed that his call and authority to preach had come direct from Al-

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mighty God and was not subject to the whims, wishes or desires of any set of church officers. Unless they could show him from the Bible that he was wrong, he would continue to declare the whole counsel of God and apply it directly to the needs of the congregation to which he had been called as pastor. Without hesitation, evasion or side-stepping he made a frontal attack on all forms of worldliness. He held up to ridicule those who had a form of godliness but not the power thereof. He spoke in biting sarcasm concerning those who sat at ease in Zion upon the Sabbath day in their pews, and then resorted to the methods of his Satanic majesty in the conduct of their lives and business affairs during the week. On Sunday after Sunday he thundered the anathemas of Jehovah against those who put the dance, the card table, and the theatre above their vows and responsibility to the work and service of the church.

It does not require a very vivid imagination to see how this method of preaching would soon create a spirit of opposition in the rank and file of the average modern church. They could not attack him on the ground of his life, for it was

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blameless. They could not seek a change of pastor on the ground that he did not know how to speak, for his language and manner of presenting the truth were of a high order. They could not seek his removal because of eccentricities of personality, for he was well balanced and kindly in his disposition. So they attacked him on the ground of emphasis. His conceptions were too narrow and ancient. They wanted someone who was more up-to-date and more in keeping with the spirit of the times. While this attitude was several years in assuming a spirit of aggressive hostility toward the pastor and his work, it did eventually become strong enough to make itself apparent. And immediately when it showed itself among the officers of the church, he tendered his resignation. This was repeated in three different churches of a long and honored ministry. When the question was put to the aged minister, "Why did you resign from the three churches in which you held lengthy pastorates?" he replied, "I resigned for the good of the work and the peace of the church." He had given his testimony, he had preached the word, he had fulfilled his mission

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to that community, and he had the grace and good sense to see that he could best serve the cause of Christ by seeking a new field rather than by remaining to engage in a controversy with a minority that was unfriendly to his work. He ended the quarrels that would have divided the church and created factions, and he did it by the easiest method yet discovered by the ministry. He resigned.



# The Membership of the Church

## THE CHURCH INFANTRY AT WAR AMONG THEMSELVES

Romans 8:9. "He that hath not the spirit of Christ is none of his."

John 13:34. "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you."

John 13:35. "By this sign shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another."

John 17:21. "That they may all be one, even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."





## The Membership of the Church

**W**HENEVER a group of people gather in an organization of any kind it is to be expected that there will be more or less friction in the adjustment of the differences that may arise. Especially is this true if it is made up of people who think for themselves, who are enterprising and aggressive individuals. A continued state of perfect peace could be found only in an organization from which all power of initiative and life had vanished. The church militant in its institutional forms is in this respect like other organizations. When people become Christians they still retain their personal idiosyncrasies. They remain human, with temper, pride, envy, often lacking in tact, sometimes indulging in censoriousness in passing judgment upon their fellow men. Or, if they have none of these faults, they may have others that are even worse. They are saints, but they still tabernacle in a body of flesh and blood. They are saved but not sanctified.

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They are sure of heaven, but they have not mastered the most difficult of all the arts, the art of right living.

The church has certain advantages over any other institution in maintaining a spirit of goodwill among its membership. The reason for this observation is found not only in the fact that the church possesses a higher standard, but also because it has a group of representative people, consisting of the pastor and officers, who are pledged in their oath of office to study its peace and harmony. A professor in one of our theological seminaries, enumerating some of the indications that a man is called to the ministry, specifies that he must not be lazy, must have a good voice, and be able to speak clearly and distinctly. Strange that it did not occur to this professor to add that the most important qualification is that he have sufficient common sense to be able to lead the people in a program of work without stirring up enmity between them. It is a source of satisfaction that Christians should be loyal enough to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints. It is to be desired that the appointed

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leaders should be zealous in the face of opposition, to seek efficient methods and see that the work of the Lord is done decently and in order. When these conditions exist in a church, they are symptoms of a healthy and normal spiritual life, and should be a source of encouragement rather than of regret. But there is reason for disappointment when those entrusted with the work of administration handle these conditions in such a way as to sow the seeds of enmity and discord. Important differences of opinion are to be expected, and the question as to whether they are adjusted in the interest of harmony or for the promotion of strife will depend largely upon the wisdom of those in authority. In the last analysis, the responsibility for a quarrel that ends in a divided church must rest with the pastor and officers under whose leadership it was made possible.

Serious trouble seldom comes from those sources where it is expected. When it is anticipated, those in positions of authority are on their guard, and are able either to avoid it, or to so direct the course of events that no serious harm

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is done. It is not the real forces of evil, but some trivial circumstance that frequently throws a harmonious and smoothly running church into a state of pandemonium.

In one of the best residence sections of a large city in the west, is located a church which affords us an excellent example of the harm that may come out of a quarrel which started in an insignificant incident. Organized as a mission point a few years ago in a rapidly growing section of the city, the membership soon found themselves poorly situated for the work they desired to do. The Jews and Negroes had moved into the district in such numbers that the class of people who supported and attended the services sought more desirable residences in other localities. Realizing that there was no future for them at that point, the faithful group remaining purchased a lot a little distance farther out in a better neighborhood and erected a modern church building. Their faith was rewarded, and for a dozen years the church experienced a rapid and steady growth. It advanced in membership to three hundred and fifty, and a Sunday School of five hundred enroll-

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ment. On account of its location and the character of the business and professional men who made up its membership, it became one of the factors in the church and civic life of the city. Pastors engaged in the development of new churches referred to it as a model neighborhood institution worthy of emulation by the people of any district. Although it had no members of wealth, all its running expenses had been paid from the beginning and the principal of its indebtedness cut down at the rate of from twelve to fifteen hundred dollars a year. It was a beautiful, attractive building and from the standpoint of architecture was an asset to the neighborhood. It was equipped with all modern conveniences. Tennis courts provided recreation for the young people, and a well kept lawn adorned with shrubbery made a prospect pleasing to the eye.

In the midst of these promising conditions, a vacancy having occurred, they called a man in middle life to become their pastor. He was highly recommended by his brethren in the ministry and was expected to lead the church into a larger work. He was versatile in his gifts, genial

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in his personality, interesting and attractive as a preacher. Results came quickly and the audiences, that had fallen off during the interim of pastorates, when the church was in the hands of supplies, rapidly grew until the building was filled. People who had previously spent Sunday in their homes began to attend the services, numbers were added to the membership, the Sunday School grew in efficiency and the Young Peoples' Society was trebled in the number attending. It was a thriving community church with everything looking bright and promising for the future. Like lightning out of a clear sky, like the shot fired by a student that started the world war, so sudden was the coming of trouble to this church. Two ladies, active in the work, had a misunderstanding which led to some bitter and sarcastic references to one another, and finally ended in their not speaking when they met in the various social functions and committee meetings with which they were connected. This was nothing unusual, nor was it the occasion for anybody to get very much excited. Incidents like this have happened many times in hundreds of churches. The pastor was

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not able to follow Dante's suggestion in regard to such matters, "Give a glance and pass them by." He thought about it a great deal and felt that it was incumbent upon him to bring about some kind of reconciliation. It occupied his mind constantly and he made it a topic of conversation as he went about among the members of his church. He did not seem to realize that talking about a matter of this kind to those not directly concerned only made matters worse. The ignoring of the whole affair by himself would have helped others to forget it. He finally got all the parties together with some of their mutual friends in an effort to make an adjustment. In this he made another mistake by giving an inconsequential incident a semi-official and public recognition. The truce agreed upon at this meeting proved a temporary settlement without removing the real source of the trouble. Realizing that he had failed to make a permanent reconciliation, the pastor now took the side of one family against the other. Then his real troubles began. It is easy to throw down the gage of battle, but the person who does so without thinking of the re-

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sults has some hard lessons to learn. In the case of a quarrel between two members of his flock the pastor occupies somewhat the same position as the referee in a boxing match. There are two things which he can do. He can compel the contestants to fight fair or he can stop the fight. Under no circumstances can he take the part of one against the other. When the minister steps into the ring and helps one side he ceases to function as a real pastor and becomes a participant in the fray. This was exactly what happened to this minister. He became the leader of a faction that was pitted against another group formed in opposition. The unfortunate part of the situation for him was the fact that a large number of the officers forming the main spiritual and financial backbone of the church were on the other side. He then took the next step toward more trouble. He turned aside from the officers of the church, elected by the vote of the people, and sought the counsel and guidance of the leaders of the group on his side. Some of them were inexperienced in the management of the church and had a personal interest at stake rather than the



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church and the welfare of the minister. In affairs of state, when the regularly constituted authorities fail to function and the government passes over to the mob, the demagogue appears as dictator to determine the course of events. This was precisely what happened in this church. When the officers failed to use their power, the strong man, the diplomat and the four-flusher appeared and practically took over the management of the church. With a few ounces of flattery they got the confidence of the pastor, and then pulled the wool over his eyes and made him think that they were serving his ends. Soon the church was hopelessly divided. The majority of the officers were against the pastor, but he still had a large following among the membership. The church quarrel now became the common topic of conversation among the membership and with the general public of the neighborhood. In the confusion and disorder that followed, the purpose for which the church was organized was forgotten. When the people met one another it was not to discuss the cause of Christ or how it could be promoted, but the question first, last and all the time was

## CHURCH QUARRELS: HOW ENDED

"How is the scrap progressing?" Under the pressure of the conflict, those on either side indulged in caustic and critical comments about their opponents. Every move was called into question, and the general attitude was one of distrust and belligerence. To the credit of the people of the church who were leaders it must be said that they did not give ear or voice to any form of slander. But not so with the rank and file. The cheap gossips and scandal-mongers could not allow an opportunity like this to pass. Soon they were peddling from door to door statements concerning the pastor and some of the officers that were purely creations of their own foul imaginations and were broadcast to the itching ears of their credulous neighbors with the sole purpose of satisfying their own mud-slinging proclivities. The Hebrew youths came out of the fiery furnace without the smell of smoke upon their garments, but no pastor or church officer ever passed through a church quarrel in which he was personally involved without a soiled reputation. When it comes to the invention of infamous lies and the circulation of slander, there is no more fertile

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field than that which is offered to the small town gossip in the occasion of a church quarrel. As meat is to the body, as breath is to the nostrils, so is the latest filthy story that reflects upon the church officer with these would-be assassins of character. There is nothing meaner out of hell than a church scrap.

This trouble soon had a paralyzing effect on the life of the church. The finances ran behind. The departments only functioned at half their former strength. The pastor and the officers and the leaders of the different factions became so troubled that they could not sleep at night, nor allow a day to pass without conferring with some one over the latest developments. The national political campaign was a secondary issue; the news of the daily paper dry reading, and business of small moment in comparison with the scrap over at the church.

The attitude of the pastor and his followers was: "Give us victory or give us death." The position of the opposing faction was: "We will never yield an inch. Unless we can be shown by some court of authority that we are wrong, we

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will never beat a retreat." At this critical juncture a group of pastors was called into conference. Acting upon their advice, it was decided to forget the past and start all over again. The pastor pledged that he would work with the men whom he had formerly repudiated. The officers in turn agreed that they would function again and help him.

The advisory committee, evading the issue and attempting to cover the difficulty with an appearance of peace, had settled nothing. Instead of forgetting the past and beginning to work anew, the two factions remembered all the past and started in to fight with more bitter determination than ever. Exasperated over the conditions, the disgruntled officers and the minority of the membership appealed to the ecclesiastical authorities. When neighbors in civil life try to adjust their differences in court they generally find more grief than justice. It is not otherwise in an ecclesiastical court. The wise man will keep out of court. This applies to the church court as well as to civil affairs. The ecclesiastical court permitted the pastor and the majority to carry on. The

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damage, however, had now been done, and their action was of little help so far as the real life of the church was concerned. The quarrel had already continued over a year and the church had been rent in twain. Wounds had been made in this long struggle that death alone can efface. Some of the irreconcilables ceased giving their financial support or gave only enough to maintain their membership, with the hope of renewing the fight sometime in the future when conditions might be more favorable to their side. Some absented themselves from the services, while others withdrew entirely and sought out more congenial places of worship.

In the meantime, the spiritual life of the church dropped to a minus quantity. Instead of being a light set on a hill, it had degenerated into a group of crippled Christians groping along, trying to raise money enough to keep the doors open and the salaries paid. Though prodigious efforts were put forth, it required years to carry it back to the position it once held in the community and in the church life of the city.

No one who has the welfare of the church at

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heart can view with equanimity a quarrel of this nature. How scraps like this may be avoided is a question of serious moment to every one who desires to see the cause of Christ advanced in the world. How they can be ended when, under some unhappy combination of circumstances they have been started, might well have a larger place in the curriculum of the training schools for young ministers and lay workers. No church quarrel was ever settled by people talking about it. The longer it is the topic of discussion in the community, the greater the time required to heal the wounds and forget the unkind things that are likely to be spoken. There is nothing that brings a family into greater contempt among their neighbors than to have their domestic infelicities the subject of common gossip or of a sensational write-up in the local press. No one cares to wash the dirty linen of the family before the curious gaze of the public. The church is a family. Some are weak and some strong. All do the best when each has its appointed task for which he is personally fitted, and for the performance of which he is made responsible. When a flash of

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temper causes an unpleasant jar, the former harmony is most quickly restored by adopting the maxim: "Forget it."

One of the many legends that have come down to us concerning the exploits of Hercules is that which tells of how he gained the mastery over the arch enemy Strife. One day he had started out on a journey along a highway that led through a rough and dangerous country. Suddenly there appeared in the highway in front of him a fierce-looking animal. He at once swung his huge club over his head, and with giant strength struck the animal down. He had not gone very far until the same animal stood in the road in front of him. There was a very remarkable change in its appearance. It was now three times as large as before. This time he attacked the monster with more strength and skill, striking it down with one terrific blow. Again it appeared, and again he struck it down. But at each reappearance it was larger and stronger than before, until it blocked the whole highway. Then Pallas appeared and counselled him saying, "The monster's name is Strife. Leave him alone and he

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will soon be as small and weak as before." Nine-tenths of the bitter quarrels that have rent church organizations asunder have arisen from trifling incidents that would soon have been forgotten, had not some one persisted in talking about them, and thus fanned the feeble flame of discord until it became a mighty conflagration.

The author spent three days with a committee investigating and adjusting the affairs of a church in which there had been a feud of a year's standing. One member of the committee took the attitude that church quarrels are a matter of ignorance of ecclesiastical law. He thought that the only thing necessary is to get the warring factions together and read them the law in very decided terms. Such knowledge might be of help in guiding the combatants, but is certainly of very little value as a preventive. Another member of the committee was a minister of mild disposition who had had little experience with the practical problems of church life outside of his work with the Sunday Schools. This amiable brother imagined that the differences arising between members could be adjusted by a practical applica-



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tion of the Golden Rule, and went about among them suggesting that they "keep sweet." Such sickly sentimentality if adopted by the majority of the committee as a course of procedure, would have left the last state of that church worse than the first. The Golden Rule has been well named. It must be acknowledged as one of the fundamental rules in determining a right course of action. It has been universally admired by the people of all religions, and even by pagan philosophers. Only mad philosophers of the type of Nietzsche, and prophets of a gospel of force have seen fit to question its validity. Historians tell us that when the Roman emperor, Severus, heard this rule he was so fascinated by the truth it contains, that he sent forth a crier to proclaim it upon the streets and the public highways when some culprit was to be punished. In order that the people without books and libraries might have its imprint upon their minds, he ordered his architects to have it inscribed over the gateway of the royal palace and in conspicuous places on the public buildings of the empire. His example is to be commended. The Golden Rule might well be painted in flaming

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letters over the entrance to every mill and factory. It should be written in the letters of personal experience upon the fleshly tablets of every heart. But after all things possible have been said in its favor, it is only a rule, which even a selfish person might feel inclined to observe. The church that would keep its membership in harmony must have something more than a rule of action. There is nothing in a perfect moral code to make the church distinctive or to give it an advantage over many other organizations. Principle is more than precept; the spirit of the law is of more value than the letter. It is only when you have Christ in the Golden Rule and back of it as a motive power that it is of any real value. It is only the person who loves Christ and has his spirit who can love his neighbor as himself. This means something far different from following Him simply as an example. Books have been written and many lectures given on the theme, "What would Jesus do, if He were in the world?" Most of them are an epitome of someone's opinions of what he would do, following certain rules and laws. No one knows enough about the rela-

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tion of the human and divine to speak with authority on what Jesus would do. He did not leave the church to the humdrum task of making small imitations of a perfect example. A church made up of people who were engaged in developing the art of self-culture would be nothing more than an aggregation of intolerable prigs. With no higher conception of their mission in the world than this, they would soon find themselves occupied with trivial and unimportant "holier than thou" pride while their ranks would be torn asunder with strife.

How different the atmosphere of the church which makes its chief aim an exemplification of the spirit of Christ. This implies an attitude of tolerance and charity. When the disciples came to Christ one day and told him that they had found someone casting out demons in His name, and had forbidden him because "he followed not us," they met with instant rebuke. The church militant can never expect to unify its forces by attempting to make everyone think just as we do on every subject, by expecting them to follow the particular goose-step by which we first learned

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to march, nor by demanding that they mold their lives into the same pattern which we have used as a model. But it can teach a spirit of tolerance which works toward unity.

Another characteristic of the spirit of Christ which makes for peace is the method of gentleness in dealing with people. The great victories of the material, moral and spiritual world are to be won by gentleness rather than by force. Military experts tell us that a bullet fired by an army rifle will not penetrate a bank of snow more than ten feet in thickness. The same bullet will pass through metal, earthworks, and pierce a tree beyond. The snow receives the speeding bullet with gentleness and stops its course with an ease that is a surprise. Whatever may be our views of methods in other spheres, we must concede that this is the most effective way of gaining the mastery in the realm of spiritual life. One day, a man in great anger came rushing into a pastor's study. He employed the most insulting language he could command, and hurled an avalanche of harsh epithets at the pastor. When he had finally spent himself in a tirade of personal invective, the

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pastor quietly offered him a chair and requested him to sit down for a few minutes. Looking the man straight in the eye, the clergyman remarked, "I did not catch all you said. Will you be kind enough to go over this whole matter again that I may understand exactly what you want?" The man grew red in the face, stammered out a few words of apology, and disappeared from the building. He had been completely mastered in a few moments by a gentle manner, when a harsher method would have meant a good thrashing for the preacher.

Still another manifestation of this spirit is in deeds of good will. One act of Christian charity will do more to win over the person who is fighting against you than forty arguments or half a hundred sermons. One day the writer called on a family who were very bitter in their antagonism toward the church. They denounced its pastor, maligned the officers and cursed the members. When the heated arguments were finished, the pastor went away feeling that he could never accomplish anything with that family. A short time afterwards, the seventeen year old son, while

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on a visit to a neighboring town, drank some poisonous bootleg liquor which was contributory in ending his life. The family were without the necessary funds to bury the boy and it seemed that the county would be compelled to give him space in the potter's field. In this hour of need, the members of the church were the first to appear at the home of grief and offer their assistance. The case was presented to the neighbors by a committee, and soon a sufficient amount was secured to buy a lot in the cemetery, pay the undertaker, and cancel three years' taxes, overdue against the home. The pastor secured a choir, opened the doors of the church and in gospel message expressed the sympathy of all the community for the parents in their bereavement. A few days afterwards the pastor and the parents met in their home. It was a different scene from his call a few months before. The sad-hearted father spoke first: "I want to beg your pardon for all the things we said against the ministers and the church. We didn't know they would treat us like this. They were the only friends we had in time of trouble. I do not believe in

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God or the Bible, but my wife does, and desires to unite with the church." Though still an unbeliever, his heart had been touched and a friendship formed for the pastor and the church that will eventually lead him to a full surrender. Those Christians who are inclined to go on the warpath, cannot be too often reminded of the fact that love is better than spite, and that good will shown toward an adversary will master a heart of hatred. The Christian can always be sure of victory over his enemies if he has faith to put into practice the injunction: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." As long as people have their thoughts centered upon themselves, they can expect hatred, malice, bitterness, backbiting, petty gossip and slander that will divide their interests, dissipate their power, and cause them to stand impotent before the world. But when they have the spirit of Christ in their relationship with one another, go about doing good, are charitable toward the faults of others and help to bear their burdens, give their energy to constructive work, you may know that the

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peace which passeth understanding is there and that heaven is not far away.

Supplementary to the spirit of Christ in avoiding quarrels among the membership, is an evaluation of the forces that are pitted against it. When a person becomes a Christian it does not necessarily follow that he should lose his fighting edge. Because he has the spirit of Christ, believes in tolerance, gentleness, good will and love as the only true basis of Christian fellowship, he need not be alarmed lest there be no foes upon whom to expend his fighting qualities. If he must fight, let it not be against his fellow Christians, but against those who are opposed to the church. A realization of their strength ought to bring to an end all strife among those who have the real interests of the church at heart. Never were the enemies of the church better equipped or more strongly entrenched than they are at the present time. Some of the most dangerous of all these foes are the ones who have carried the battle within the gates. Just as the Greek forces in the siege of Troy gained admission to the city by means of a wooden horse that they might fight



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to better advantage within the walls, so the modern masters of ecclesiastical strategy have gained admission to the inner circles that they may the more effectively use the weapons of destructive criticism. We have instances of this in several of our prominent theological schools. These schools were founded and endowed by those who believed in Bible Christianity. To safeguard the teaching, they were placed under the control of a denomination of the same faith as the donors. Many of the chairs of these institutions are to-day manned by those who no longer teach the Christianity of the Bible, but a clever modern substitute for it. Young Jews, training to become Rabbis in the synagogue, and skeptics of the Ingersoll type, preparing for the lecture platform, find no objection to the general content of the teaching. They occupy seats in the classroom beside the young men who have come from the evangelical church to prepare for life service in the protestant ministry. This method of stealing strategic positions in the seminaries is iniquitous not only because of the character of the teaching, but because it is a repudiation of the fundamental laws

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of common honesty in the handling of trust funds. These enemies of the church in high places afford a foe against which the fighting Christian can exercise his talents.

Many of the graduates of these schools are now the pastors of prominent churches. From the pulpits that were made possible by the sacrifice and gifts of Christian people, they proclaim a message and a form of religion which, if accepted, would put every orthodox church in America out of commission. These men, masquerading under the name of Christian and preaching a spurious gospel, expect to draw the salaries and feed upon the loaves and fishes made possible by orthodox Christianity. Certainly these men offer themselves as worthy foes to all those of fighting caliber, who desire to take a whip of small cords and drive them out of our houses of worship.

Another group that is doing effective work in undermining the faith of the church is to be found in the radical teachers in many of our higher institutions of learning. It was the teaching of the doctrine of force by the philosophers of Germany that caused the World War. It is the teaching

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of a naturalistic philosophy of life as opposed to Christianity that is producing certain alarming results in our country to-day. As a consequence, there has sprung up a widespread conspiracy that constitutes a revolt against the established order, that strikes at the very foundations of church and state. Civilization has actually broken down in many parts of the country. Young bandits have been able to terrorize great cities and practically ignore the regularly constituted authorities. Large sums of money transported through the streets are safe only when carried in an armoured car and protected by a small army equipped with rifles and machine guns. The subnormal class from which these bandits and the traffickers in illicit liquors and narcotics are recruited is on the increase. In some states there are more people in the insane asylums and idiot hospitals than in the colleges and universities. Because room cannot be provided for them in the state institutions, these degenerates are allowed to roam the streets and breed their kind, contaminating their progeny with their criminal tendencies.

Of equally ominous import is the alienation

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from the church of the working classes in the industrial centers of the country. They feel that the church is for the wealthy and well-to-do. They are indifferent or hostile to the message and the program it has to offer. Agitators and communistic writers are constantly pouring literature into the hands of these discontented ones and some of their strongest and most vitriolic attacks are directed against the church. If this combination of forces is allowed to go on unchecked, Macaulay's prophecy of the future of the Anglo-Saxon will be fulfilled, and some fierce-eyed Bolshevik will sit down amidst the smoking ruins of one of our great American cities to write the story of a vanished civilization.

Equally alarming with the strength of the enemies of the church is our own lack of preparedness and efficiency in meeting them. There are several thousand school districts in the country where there is no Protestant work of any kind. There are twenty million young people in the country between the ages of six and twenty-one, that are growing up to become the future citizens

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of our fair land, and they are without religious instruction of any kind.

These are the conditions that we face and some of the forces that stand as a challenge to the Christian faith. The only hope for the conservation of the ethical progress of the world and for the passing of it on to the future is to be found in the membership of the church.

If the country is to be saved from irremediable ruin, it will be through the church setting its forces in battle array against the hordes of the onrushing enemy. A nation divided through internal strife, has generally had sufficient statesmanship and patriotism to unite against the more formidable foe knocking at its gates from without. A family, wrangling among themselves, quickly forget their own small differences when real danger threatens from some outside source. The membership of the church, as they hear the tramp of the on-coming enemy bent on their annihilation, ought to have sufficient loyalty to Christ to forget their minor grievances, put aside their petty quarrels and stand with united front under the banners of the cross in defense of a common cause.



## The Choir

THE WAR DEPARTMENT OF THE CHURCH

Psalm 150.

"Praise ye Jehovah, Praise God in his sanctuary;  
Praise him in the firmament of his power.  
Praise him for his mighty acts;  
Praise him according to his excellent greatness.  
Praise him with trumpet sound.  
Praise him with psaltery and harp.  
Praise him with timbrel and dance;  
Praise him with stringed instruments and pipe.  
Praise him with loud cymbals.  
Praise him with high sounding cymbals.  
Let everything that hath breath praise Jehovah.  
Praise ye Jehovah."





## The Choir

The choir has been very fittingly called the war department of the church. The devil finds his most easy approach to mar the harmony of the worshipping congregation through the choir loft. The average church has either just settled some difficulty that has arisen through a misunderstanding in regard to the choir, is at present struggling with the problem of making some necessary adjustment or is preparing for some emergency that is likely to arise in the near future. The author had a friend who was a member of the Presbyterian church until an organ was purchased, when he withdrew his membership to enter the Reformed Presbyterian church. He had another member of his church who was always inspired to indulge in a tirade of abusive language when he heard the music of a violin which he spoke of as the devil's instrument. Whenever it was introduced he would walk out of the building until the number was finished, and then return to his

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seat for the remainder of the service. He had the reputation of being able to stand erect after a larger drink of Scotch whiskey than any other man in the State, and yet he was altogether too self-righteous and opinionated to tolerate any kind of a stringed instrument in the worship of the Lord.

The personal eccentricities of these unfortunate individuals who found themselves so out of harmony with the rest of the people are not any more ludicrous than the average pastor faces in his work in a small town almost every week of his ministerial experience. The problem of the music is opened every Monday morning and not closed until the benediction is pronounced on the following Sunday night. If a minister has never had any heartbreaks over the music of his church he ought to go through the experience at least once to know what it can do in upsetting one's ministerial poise and self-complacency.

One day a student was seated in his room in the seminary hoping that he might be called to some church as a supply for the summer vacation months when a stranger knocked at the door.

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The guest was a pastor of one of the stronger churches in a presbytery in another part of the state. He had been sent to the student by the seminary authorities with the thought that he would be a suitable person to take charge of a divided church. In this instance, the feeling of animosity had become so strong that the entire administrative work of the local church had been taken out of the hands of regular officers and placed under the direct authority of the presbytery. The only semblance of an organization was a group of trustees who worked under the direction of the committee of presbytery in raising the necessary funds to keep the church doors open.

The trouble had arisen through the choir. Some of the young people in the choir had gone to a card party. The pastor and elders summoned the delinquents into their presence and proceeded to exercise discipline by forbidding them to have any further part in the public worship of the church. In a few days their action was the common gossip of the entire membership, and in fact, of all the people in the small town and surrounding country. Two parties were rapidly formed.

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A meeting was held in which a clear-headed moderator had to exercise considerable ingenuity in keeping some of the men from coming to blows. For three years the community had been divided. No one would sing in the choir under any condition. Large numbers of the people would not speak to one another. When the young student arrived he was welcomed by a congregation of two hundred people. At the close of the service he would rush forward to the door that he might speak to the people as they passed out. He did this on two Sundays, going to the same door on both occasions. Then, some person in the congregation, solicitous for his welfare, suggested that he go to the other door half the time, as most of the people in the other faction passed out of that door on their way home, and if he were to succeed he must not show any partiality.

A contrast in the handling of a situation like the above is in evidence in the policy followed by the student in comparison with that of his predecessor. The pastor who preceded him spoke on the law one Sunday and the love of the gospel the next. But in every instance he made the ap-

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plication as it had to do with the local situation. There was never a sermon given or a prayer offered in which the congregation were not reminded of their differences and the awful harm that they were doing to the cause of Christ. He prayed that the Lord send sickness, calamity and death until the trouble be wiped out. And when the people on both sides commenced to retaliate by criticising him, he resigned and remarked: "I am going to do what the devil has never done." Someone inquired what that could be. He replied: "I am going to leave this church."

The student on the other hand never mentioned the troubles of the church. Neither in public or private did he ever discuss them. He assumed a friendly attitude toward everybody. When some one, anxious to keep alive the old feud, attempted to tell the story of wrongs that could never be righted, he tactfully turned the conversation to more helpful and interesting topics. He tried what Channing has spoken of as the "expulsive power of a new affection." He directed their thought along paths that were so illuminated with things worth while that they

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gradually forgot the old grudges, or at any rate, quit discussing them. The congregation did not have to wait for calamity and death to remove the ring leaders of their quarreling factions, but soon found themselves united in doing those things which the church was set in the world to accomplish.

Music is so inseparably connected with religion and the public worship of God that we could not think of one without the other. From the time that King David employed four thousand people to lead in the chants and utilized every form of musical instrument known at that time to heighten the effect down to the present time the sublimest experiences of Christian faith and practice have found most complete expression in some form of music. Music has been called the common language of earth and heaven since we know emotions by it that have never been revealed to us in any other way. It is in the playing of the organ or in singing that we sometimes catch glimpses of "that light that ne'er shone on land or sea." All nature is vibrating the musical scale. If we had the facilities for tuning-in we would hear the

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rhythm of the movements of the stars and planets through space, and listen-in on "the music of the spheres." We have all many different ideas as to what heaven is like. We picture it in the imagery of the Bible as the beautiful city, as our home, as the place of green pastures through which flows the river of life, as the house of many mansions and a place of rest, but no picture of heaven would quite satisfy that did not provide for the broadcasting of the heavenly harmonies and the employment of a part of the time, at least, in the singing of the songs of the redeemed. On the Sabbath day the people enter the houses of worship with thoughts of self and the business cares of life. For six days they have their eyes fixed upon the earth, but in the hour of song they are lifted toward something higher, and their souls are blended in a common thought and aspiration toward the object of their worship. Music then performs its chief function when it attunes the hearts and minds of the congregation to a spirit of devotion and worship.

Music is a means of winning souls. The great hymns written primarily for purposes of worship

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have given way in many of the churches to the more popular use of gospel songs. The gospel song was a new style of music introduced into the worship of the church in the middle of the last century. Dwight L. Moody, a business man, becoming a preacher found Sankey, a singer, and the two traveling together through the different countries in their evangelistic campaigns, did much to popularize the gospel songs which have now come into almost universal use. Many of us feel the loss, in the smaller churches especially, of the neglect of the great hymns written like the prayers as a means of worship, and are dissatisfied with a service limited to the songs. The gospel song, like the sermon, was written for purposes of instruction and guidance with an appeal to the will. While the hymn was addressed to God as the object of worship, the gospel song is addressed to the audience. The gospel songs are used for the same purposes as the campaign songs of the political parties of a former period of time. Under the leadership of the political campaign managers large numbers of songs were prepared and set to music and then sent out as effective



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propaganda. They contained the principles for which the party was contending, and were prepared with the idea of stirring their constituency with the fires of enthusiasm and rallying them around the party standards. In like manner has been the motive in the preparation and printing so many books of gospel songs. Noted evangelistic singers, like Messrs. Sankey and Alexander, gained their fame not because they were themselves gifted with special musical talent, but because of their ability to get great audiences of people to unite whole heartedly in the singing of these songs. Leadership of this type, devoted to the best in church and secular music, would be a godsend to many communities that have their noblest feelings and aspirations stifled by a long protracted age of jazz.

One of the chief barriers, especially in the small town, in uniting the Christian forces is found in the unwillingness of the average musician to do team work. The individual vocal and instrumental talent may be of an exceptionally high order, but the jealousy, temperamental disposition and innate selfishness of the choir renders

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them incapable of pulling together in a program that would work for the musical regeneration and uplift of the community as a whole. Undoubtedly, the uniting of all the musical talent of a town of five to ten thousand population would give that place a mark of distinction in the life of the country. It would require, however, the statesmanship of a Burke, the diplomacy of a Hughes, the executive ability of a Gary, coupled with superior musical talent to keep these forces working together in harmony until they secure the full results of which they are capable. The task of the preacher, in uniting the Christians of the community in one body, is a modest undertaking compared with that of the musical director who would aspire to the same results in his line.

Whatever the means employed, or the number of people enlisted, music has ever been one of the most effective ways of disseminating the Christian faith. Profound sermons based upon the teachings of the Bible have their place; carefully prepared arguments carry weight, but they always accomplish their purpose with the greatest ease when they are supplemented with the help of

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song. When other methods fail, the gospel winged in song finds lodgment in the human heart, and becomes a necessary supplement to the sermon in leading to a surrendered life.

Music is also a means for the unification of the churches. In this respect, at least the prayer of Christ that His people be one has been answered in a very remarkable way. There perhaps always will be differences of opinion and clashes between rival factions as to certain policies to be pursued, but in church music these are put farther in the background than at any other time. When we unite in songs of praise it never occurs to us that we are using words that were written by someone belonging to an entirely different faith from ourselves. Whoever stops to think that he is praising God in the words of a Roman Catholic when he sings that hymn:

“Jesus, Thou Joy of loving hearts,  
Thou Fount of life, Thou Light of men”?

What hyper-Calvinist would hesitate or argue a bit before giving his consent to sing the words of a champion of the Armenian doctrine when someone announces the hymn of Charles Wesley:

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“Jesus, Lover of my soul,  
Let me to Thy bosom fly”?

or that other one:

“Sinners turn, why will you die?  
God your maker, asks you why”?

Or where could you find an iconoclastic modernist so cynical and self-conceited in his repudiation of truth expressed by a fundamentalist that he would refuse to sing the doctrines of John Calvin as expressed in the hymn of Toplady:

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee”?

Men take issue with one another as to form of government, mode of worship, methods of work, but in the singing of the great hymns that have become the universal heritage of christendom they are one. They are like a group of mountain peaks that one views from a distance in some places in the Rockies. At first glance they appear separate. But a closer inspection reveals them as belonging to the same mountain range. They are separate and distinct as to their peaks, but united in body like Christian people who differ as to their heads and way of thinking, but at heart they are one.

Strange that music which has been the means

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of the expression of the highest form of Christian unity in the world should be also the cause of some of the most bitter feuds and battles that have ever been waged between the contending factions of church denominations. It is in the administrative work however, and not in the real things of music itself that we have the source of discord. Those pastors and officers who have worked out this problem in such a way as to secure efficiency and harmony in the keeping of the machinery of the church running smoothly, need have little fear of other issues that may demand their attention.

In a desire to get the best results, congregations have adopted all sorts of methods. One of the favorite plans of wealthy churches has been to secure a good organist, and a quartet of high priced artists to do the singing for the people. A friend of the author was at one time invited to sing for a few Sundays in a choir of this kind. The loft was so arranged that the choir members could not be seen by the congregation except when singing. The minister was an eloquent and scholarly man who had been a success upon the

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stage before he was called into the ministry. But while he gave his sermon, lasting nearly an hour, to a large congregation, the friend was the only member of the choir who listened. The organist spent the time in assorting the sheets of music. The alto studied her French lesson, the soprano read a novel, and the bass employed his time in reading the Sunday paper. When the sermon was finished and the prayer offered this aggregation in the choir loft at one end of the church would stand to lead the people in their closing song of praise.

Obviously, the worship of a church led by a choir of this character could never be anything more than a matter of form. However perfect the technique it is hollow mockery as a part of any attempt at worship. The person who would start a fight to get this type of singers removed from his church should have no difficulty in enlisting the aid of all right thinking men and women.

Back of the song is the singer. The character and sincerity of the singer are just as essential to the message of the song as they are to that of the sermon from the pulpit. Unless songs come from

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the heart as an act of worship they will never get any nearer heaven than the rafters of the building in which they find expression.

The largest congregations of any Protestant church in America gather in a building where there is a trained quartet of talented singers, a large chorus to support them in the hymns and less difficult anthems, a list of special soloists, a junior choir of children in the balcony, a pipe organ, two pianos and an orchestra of forty people. The church has a preacher of unusual popularity, but both he and the people realize that music also has its place and is necessary to help hold the audiences that gather three thousand strong three times every Sunday to have part in the services.

The average church is not blessed with this kind of an array of musical help. But those who aspire to popularity and desire that the house be filled on the Sabbath day will realize that their success will largely depend upon the number of people who have some responsibility in helping in the service.

By common consent, the minister cannot handle

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the music of his church single-handed. If he is honest and sincere he will soon be compelled to make decisions that are injurious to his popularity to say nothing of the ill will incurred by irritating the sensitive nature of some of the temperamental parishioners who have ambitions along musical lines.

He would not get very far nor have a very happy pastorate who attempted to solve all the problems that come up in connection with the music of his church. He would soon come to grief in dealing with the ambitious mothers, the aspiring musical prodigies, the promising talent that would be looking to him for proper recognition on every occasion. If he would avoid trouble and get the results desired he must do three things. *First*: Secure an efficient and capable person with whom he is in accord as to the general policies and aim of the musical program. *Second*: Appoint an advisory committee of agreeable persons who will not tie the hands of the chairman. *Third*: Place in the hands of this committee chairman the authority of a czar and demand results. The pastor who adopts this



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plan will avoid an endless number of scraps, keep the unity of spirit and bond of peace that is so essential if his sermons are to have their desired power and effect.

Whatever the cause of the quarrels that occur between ourselves and our fellowmen there are at least four possible ways in which they may be ended. *First*: They can be settled by physical force. In this instance the biggest brute has the advantage and the tyrant in the end may stand as victor over the prostrate form of his innocent victim. The strength and cunning of a Dempsey will triumph over the brains and skill of a Coolidge. *Second*: There is the appeal to a court of justice. A resort to law is of a higher order than an appeal to force. But in the end it is often equally unsatisfactory in securing a just settlement. The Bible is just as infallible as a guide when it warns against going to law as it is when it speaks about how to go to heaven. And what it says about civil courts may be applied with equal wisdom as to the inadvisability of Christian people resorting to an ecclesiastical court in adjusting their differences. *Third*: There is

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the arbitration method. Secure the appointment of disinterested parties who, after an investigation of the facts, suggest a settlement that they consider the best possible solution of the case in hand. In accepting the verdict both parties may suffer loss and be disappointed, but in the end they will be ahead of those who have resorted to either force or law. *Fourth:* There is the method of stopping a quarrel before it has become serious. "Agree with thine adversary quickly while thou art in the way with him." "Be angry and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath." "Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good."

Trust in the working of the eternal law of the moral government of the universe to win your case remembering the affirmation—"Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord." If forced to deal with those who cannot be trusted and suffer loss as a result, consider that it is worth something to have discovered a thief, to have unearthed a crook or to have brought to light a traitor. Your loss will be more than compensated

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for in the knowledge of his character that you have obtained. Charge up the cost to the lessons of experience. It is an expensive school, but its lessons are of enduring value.



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